

Dear Student,

Your school has made the decision to provide your parents with a tool to help give them more awareness of what type of information you are sharing on social media. We wanted to give you a heads up so you understand the purpose of our program and how it works. But we really hope you will talk to your parents about it. It is their responsibility to keep you safe—online and offline.

SafeStudents Online is not a way for your parents to “spy” on you. It does not allow them to see everything you post, and it only sends them alerts if you are posting inappropriate material such as profanity or other problematic topics, or posting unacceptable pictures or videos. Your parents cannot hack into your account or make changes and they do not need your passwords to use our program. If you are not posting inappropriate information, your parents won’t receive alerts.

We understand that interacting with your friends on social media is important to you, but you need to be responsible about what you post and share. Information on the Internet does not go away easily, and it can be shared with lots of people you did not intend to see it. You may already know people who have had problems because of what they or someone else posted online. And there are terrible people on the Internet that will harm you or ruin your reputation if given the chance.

We hope this helps, and we hope you’ll talk to your parents if you have any questions.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is SafeStudents Online?**

**A:** SafeStudents Online is a parental monitoring tool that helps your parents protect you from potential online dangers, such as cyber bullying, cyber stalking and online predators as well helping to protect your reputation. SafeStudents Online is not about spying or invading your privacy; instead, parents and kids should work together to ensure online safety.

### **Q: Can my parents see my social media profile?**

**A:** SafeStudents Online allows your parents to know if mean comments are being posted on your profile, or if inappropriate or dangerous messages are sent to or from you on social media. But parents will not see most of what you post (only the bad stuff). Remember, what you post online is not private so you should be careful about what you choose to post.

### **Q: Why are my parents spying on me?**

**A:** Your parents are doing their best to keep you safe from the potential dangers of social networking. Your parents want to work with you to make sure you have fun online while still following some rules around behavior online. Monitoring your social media is to keep you safe, not to pry into your life. As long as boundaries are respected and your friends (and you) realize some things are not meant to be shared publicly, there will be no issue.

**Q: I keep hearing about “privacy settings.” How do I know if my settings are correct?**

**A:** Privacy settings are the ways to control who can see your information. Keep your status and photos private. When in doubt, use the “Preview my profile” button on any privacy settings page to check how your information appears to others. Sit down with your parents to make sure everything is set the way you want it. Facebook and some of the other social networking accounts even let you set privacy rules on every picture, video or comment you post – so make sure you check before you hit enter.

**Q: When I post something to my Facebook account, who sees it?**

**A:** This will depend on how you have set your privacy settings. We recommend that only your friends see your posts and pictures. We also recommend that nothing is set to “Public” because that means that everyone on the Internet can see it. Remember this when using other sites like online photo accounts including Flickr.

**Q: What kinds of photos are safe to post?**

**A:** Photos you post might seem perfectly innocent to you, but mean something totally different to someone else. A safe photo to post would be something you would be okay if your parents, teachers, or grandparents saw. Your account is a reflection of you. And someday, a college or future employers may also look at your account, so make sure you only post things you would want them to see or know about you. And always remember, once you put a photo them on a social networking site, it can be copied, shared and posted by others – even if you mark it private.

**Q: How can I remove something I don’t want posted, like a mean comment or photo?**

**A:** If this is something you posted, you can normally delete it pretty easily from your account by clicking on it and then selecting “delete” or “remove”. If it’s a comment someone posted to your page, click on the comment and an “X” will pop up in the upper right corner. You can delete the comment there. Deleting photos is just as easy. If a friend tags you, you can remove the tag. You can even ask your friend to remove the photo entirely if you’re uncomfortable with it. But remember, once things are posted to the Internet you can never really be certain that they have been deleted. Someone could have already forwarded the message or photo to others or saved it to their computer. Remember to stop, reread and think twice before posting anything online.

**Q: I feel bad saying “NO” if people request to follow me or be my friend.**

**A:** Your social network account is your world. Just as you can minimize interacting with people you don’t know or like in real life (or as much as possible, anyway!), you can and should do so on Facebook, Twitter and other social networking accounts. You don’t owe anyone an explanation for your choice. If someone tries to force the issue and bully you into being their “friend”, it just proves why you don’t want them in your world.

**Q: My parents say I can’t be connected to adults online, even my teachers or coaches. Why?**

**A:** Adults post comments that may be appropriate for other adults and may be inappropriate for children and teenagers. Think of it like a PG, PG-13 or R-rated movie. Some things are meant just for

adults because they include adult content. Also, adults you might be connected to cannot control what other adults post, therefore, they cannot control what you see.

**Q: What should I do if I think someone I don't know is trying to contact me?**

**A:** The Internet is a place where anyone can contact you, whether you know them or not. So, when you use Facebook or Twitter, play a video game with an internet connection or visit "chat" websites, you might come across people you do not know. Do not engage in discussion with these people. Also, do not give them your address, phone number or any other personal information.

**Q: A classmate is posting mean comments on my profile. What should I do?**

**A:** If someone is posting hurtful messages to you or about you online, you can ignore, unfriend or block that user in order to avoid contact with them. If the person doesn't stop, you should talk to an adult who you trust – your parents, a family member, a teacher or even the school guidance counselor. Even online, these types of comments can really hurt, and your parents and teachers are here to protect you.

**Q: How do I know if I am being cyberbullied? How is it different than teasing?**

**A:** Cyberbullying is intentional, repeated, mean behavior that occurs online or other digital means like texting. The comments, pictures or posts are meant to be hurtful. Cyberbullying can include taunting, name calling, threats or intimidation, insults based on race, gossip or any other behavior that you want to stop because it upsets you. Teasing between friends is not meant to be hurt someone's feeling, it's more playful, but can escalate to bullying when one person is no longer having fun. For example, if the teasing continues even after the person being teased has repeatedly asked the person to stop, that teasing could now be called cyberbullying.

**Q: What should I do if someone is bullying me?**

**A:** Tell your parents or another trusted adult immediately. Don't keep it to yourself. Don't reply to messages from cyberbullies – even though you may really want to! They want to know that they've got you worried and upset. Also, do not delete the messages so you can show your parents the comments you are referring to.

**Q: My friend is posting comments about suicide and I am worried about them. What should I do?**

**A:** Tell your parents, teachers or another trusted adult immediately. If you know of someone who is sharing thoughts or feelings of committing suicide don't assume that the person is just kidding or not being serious about their feelings. It is extremely important that you act quickly and tell someone in authority so you can get them the help they need to deal with the emotions their feeling.